



**Off-Leash Dog Area Committee
MINUTES
February 5, 2009**

Submitted by: Eric Thompson – Staff, Parks and Recreation
Attending: Betsy Mowry – Chair, Parks and Recreation Commission

Name	Ward	District Council
Jan Carr	1	8 – Summit/University
Karl Sevig	2	3 – WSCO
Jeanne Hall	2	17 – Capitol River Council
Camie Pederson	3	14 – Mac/Groveland
Maureen Haggerty	3	15 – Highland Park
Brian Christianson	4	11 – Hamline/Midway
Bill Anderson	4	12 – St. Anthony Park
Kristine Kammuelier	5	6 – District 6 Planning Council
Liz Cappiello	5/6	5 – Payne/Phalen Dist. 5
Ryan Bierwerth	7	1 – Battle Creek/Highwood
Rene Rude		Humane Society
No visitors attended		

Introductions

- Betsy Mowry introduced herself as Chair of the committee, and explained that Wendy Moylan had resigned as co-chair earlier in the week;
- Eric Thompson explained his role as staff for the committee. He will be responsible for agendas, minutes and supporting information. Thompson explained that committee information will be posted on the Parks and Recreation web site under off-leash activities or Park Security – he will let everyone know where to find the information. Jan Carr suggested using a “social” site to post information;
- Committee members introduced themselves.

Committee Purpose

- Staff distributed a description of the committee member requirements and emphasized that the purpose of the committee is to “advise and guide” the Parks Commission and Parks and Recreation on all issues related to off-leash recreation, and the focus is not solely on the creation of new off-leash dog parks;
- Mowry explained that she intends to keep the meetings on task, and that all members should be respectful of the various opinions and feelings, and that members should remember to differentiate between committee work versus their own personal agenda items;
- There was general discussion about how to fill absentee seats or extended absences. Staff will work with chair and district councils to try and keep positions filled with citizens eager to participate.

Update on Current Issues

2008 Task Force Recommendations – review

- Staff provided a verbal “summary” of the 2008 TF recommendations.

Below are the highlights of the recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION ONE

Establish a sub-committee of the Parks and Recreation Commission to advise the City regarding off-leash dog area development and issues.

RECCOMENDATION TWO

Enhancements to Arlington/Arkwright Off-Leash Dog Area:

- a) Post hours of sunrise to sunset;
- b) Modify the parking on Arkwright St.;
- c) Install additional trash receptacles at the South utility gate; Replace the fencing along the upper, South-east section of the park;
- d) (The City) should continue with burr removal twice annually;
- e) Address and correct erosion problems within the park.
- f) Recognize Off Leash Advocates Inc. as the official stewardship group for the Arlington/Arkwright OLDA;
- g) Install a double gate at the main entrance (NW corner near steps);
- h) A separated small dog area be developed;

RECCOMENDATION THREE

Off Leash Dog Areas which will comprise a system for (The City) be considered as two subsets. “Destination” sites will be initiated for consideration by (The City). “Neighborhood” sites will be initiated for consideration by community members.

The Task Force sees its higher priority the development of further Destination sites in order to create an Off Leash Dog Area system and relieve the intensity of use at Arlington/Arkwright.

- a) **In regards to Destination sites, a grading system based on a list of criteria will be used for rating by (The City).**
 - (1) A point scale will be used for each criteria item.
 - (2) Each potential site will be rated using the grading system by volunteers and (The City) staff.
 - (3) Sites that are rated highest on the matrix would be considered the best opportunities for off-leash dog areas.
- b) **In regards to Neighborhood sites, a process will be developed for residents or a community group to bring forth a proposed area.**
 - (1) The process will include the District Council.
 - (2) The criteria developed for Destination sites may be adapted for use for Neighborhood sites.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR

Upon the opening of an additional Destination site, a **user permit fee system be implemented**. The permit revenues should be earmarked specifically for off leash dog areas. In order to obtain the annual permit, a license is required.

RECCOMENDATION FIVE

Bluff Park and “Island Station” be considered as potential off-leash areas.

CIB Proposals

- Parks' will submit CIB proposals for Bluff Park and for "typical" off-leash dog areas;
- Staff suggested the committee send letters of support for the proposals;
- Betsy Mowry and Karl Sevig offered to draft support letters;
- Bill Anderson moved to submit support letters. Cappiello seconded. Vote: 11-0.

Legacy Amendment

There was general discussion about the Legacy Amendment and the potential for some of the funds to be earmarked for regional off-leash dog parks. The legislation is being sponsored by Rick Hanson of South St. Paul.

- The bill tracking number is HF-297;
- There has been some local radio discussion about this being an improper use of the legacy funds – folks should keep informed about this bill, and as individuals, contact their representative and encourage their support.

Lilydale Regional Park

This regional park is under master plan review. Three concept proposals have been submitted and the "recreational" concept includes an off-leash dog area just west of, and adjacent to the boat launch. This proposal appears to be gaining support, but the City is waiting for the natural resource inventory/study. Information about the planning process is available at www.ci.stpaul.mn.us and search "Lilydale Master Plan".

- Staff suggested the committee invite folks involved on the Lilydale Planning Committee to attend and OLDA committee meeting to discuss the issues;
- Bill Anderson offered to chair a sub-committee to participate in the planning process. The sub-committee includes: Liz Cappiello, Jeanne Hall, Jan Carr and Cammie Pederson. They will provide an update at the March meeting;

Opportunities

Staff noted that Parks and Recreation is likely to undergo substantial restructuring due to impending budget situation. In addition, work on one project may trigger opportunities for other OLDA projects.

Lower Landing Park (aka Lambert's Landing)

The new Lafayette Bridge project has opened up a discussion about establishing an off-leash area on the land under - and to the east of the bridge.

- The area has parking available and could offer an attractive site for downtown residents;
- No preliminary designs have been developed, but Parks' is looking into the feasibility of this site as a potential OLDA;

Recreation center and golf course sites

Recreation center and golf course sites may be changed as Parks' restructures. What opportunities would be available for off-leash recreation at these sites?

- How could this committee help the Parks' Commission and Parks' Department understand the potential of opening a golf course for winter off-leash recreation?
- What recreation center properties could be used for neighborhood off-leash recreation if they are changed from their past uses?

Off-Leash Dog Area Committee

MINUTES: 2/5/09

Opportunities – continued

- What types of events could be coordinated that would educate the public, provide recreation, generate funds to be used towards dog parks – or just create a good social environment for people and their dogs?
- How about a dog movie in the park?
- How about “dog days” at recreation center sites?
- People should think “outside-the-box”

Events Committee

Several people offered to establish a sub-committee to coordinate events. Committee members include: Liz Cappiello, Brian Christianson, Cammie Pederson, Maureen Haggerty and Eric Thompson.

Permit Fees

Permit fees were recommended by the 2008 task force – to be implemented with the establishment of another “destination” park. Committee members felt this discussion was premature and should be held over to the March meeting.

Motion to Adjourn: Liz Cappiello. Seconded: Jeanne Hall. Vote: 11-0.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 5th 6:30 – 8:30 PM at Oxford Community Center